# Padlocked!

## an exhibition of Czech and Slovak independent writings

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

October 24, 1988 ~ January 6, 1989

# PADLOCKED!

An Exhibition of
Czech and Slovak
Independent Writings

Any person purchasing a typewriter in Czechoslovakia has to have his name, address, and a sample of the type registered with the Secret Police.

The penalty for typing out clandestine journals or documents is 12 months to 2 years.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
University of Toronto

https://archive.org/details/padlockedexhibit00huss

# Preface

The significance of the books and pamphlets on display can only be grasped when they are seen in their historical context. After the Soviet intervention of 1968, Czechoslovakia underwent a period of "normalization", in effect, a cleansing of the system. Many organizations were dissolved, throwing members out of work, until they indicated they supported the Soviet invasion. Those, like the authors whose books are on display, who never agreed to the invasion, were not allowed to resume their former occupations. These authors had to earn their living as manual labourers, if they were allowed to work at all, and to write in their spare time, without any hope of getting their work published. Some began to type up their work in multiple copies and distribute them to interested friends, who then typed out copies for themselves and sent the originals on to others. Thus began many of the Czechoslovak unofficial publishing enterprises.

The Fisher Library makes no apology for displaying photocopies in some instances. Many works are available in the West only in that form; the Czech Ministry of Interior or the authors themselves retain the original copies.

The Fisher Library would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor H. Gordon Skilling for his many years of support. Not only did he give us the idea of collecting these types of materials, but over the past decade, has written funding proposals, bought books, publicized the collection, introduced us to people who were able to add to our holdings from their own collections and in effect, left no stone unturned to assist us in adding to and making known these important materials.

Luba Hussel

## Introduction: From Gutenberg to Samizdat

Before the invention of printing, books and documents could circulate only in a limited number of manuscript copies, which were often beautifully illustrated and bound. Five hundred years later, in an age of advanced electronic communication, a more primitive, typewritten medium emerged and came to be called *samizdat*, the Russian abbreviation for self-publication. This became a new channel of communication which challenged the official system of state-run publishing and censorship. Books are prepared by a small number of devoted persons willing to take the risks of writing, typing, binding and even illustrating these publications. These works circulate in relatively small numbers, perhaps as few as thirty to one hundred copies, ironically not far from the number of incunabula produced in each print run in the early years after Gutenberg.

*Samizdat* is in a sense as old as the conspiratorial production of leaflets, prepared on underground printing presses by revolutionaries in many countries with authoritarian regimes, or the circulation of hand-written or printed books banned by official publishers. But *samizdat* in its modern form really emerged as a powerful medium of communication in the Soviet Union in the mid-sixties, and in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and even China, in the seventies. Although it was almost completely extinguished in the Soviet Union in the early eighties, it has been stimulated anew under Gorbachev. In Poland the phenomenon reached huge dimensions before Solidarity and has continued to appear on a large scale under martial law. In Czechoslovakia, in spite of severe repression, *samizdat* has continued to appear in ever growing quantities for almost fifteen years now.

If the Russians invented *samizdat*, wrote Pavel Tigrid, Czech émigré publicist and editor, "it is undoubtedly the Czechs who perfected the system and made it an art". The human rights declaration of Charter 77 in January 1977 gave birth to a substantial diffusion of typewritten materials, including the Charter documents and many other uncensored materials written by individuals and groups, such as the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted (VONS). Even before the issuance of the Charter, Edice Petlice began to appear in 1973 as a series of typewritten and bound books of *belles lettres*, philosophy, history, etc. More than three hundred volumes have been published in this series. Charter 77 was a catalyst for independent writings of all kinds, including other book series, such as Expedice, and Kvart. Many scholarly journals also began to be published in *samizdat*, covering fields such as history, economics, and, most recently, sociology, literature and the arts, and youth magazines. Other materials appeared in the "grey zone", that is the printed journals and books of the Jazz Section, which enjoyed official status until it was closed down. A great wealth of Catholic *samizdat* was also produced, including books and regular journals, which often appeared in printed form. In spite of the constant persecution of writers, typists, binders and distributors, the tide of unofficial or parallel writings has risen steadily. Most recently, photocopy machines and other forms of multiplication have become available to a limited degree and have increased the quantities of materials produced.

A prolific *samizdat* author, Milan Šimečka, has written of these "home-made" books: "Concealed in attics and in various absurd places, they are passed secretly from hand to hand ... some of them have been paid for dearly, by imprisonment, humiliation and anxiety. But one thing is certain: whatever the future may bring, these home-made books will provide a testimony of the time in which we live ..." Jan Vladislav, editor of Kvart, has written that this "parallel" or "typewriter" culture provided "the most eloquent evidence of the nation's desire for freedom of expression" and offered "one way of preventing the Czech nation from being robbed of its identity and having an alien identity substituted instead".

Many of these *samizdat* writings made their way abroad through various channels, thus implementing the "right to freedom of expression" and to "receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of borders", enunciated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but violated by the Czechoslovak authorities. They provide a rich resource of material for scholars, journalists and governments, who frequently use the information contained therein to raise questions with the official Czechoslovak authorities, and to debate human rights at international meetings such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. These materials are made available to foreign readers, in Czech and in translation, through the work of documentation centres like The Documentation Centre for the Promotion of Independent Czechoslovak Literature in West Germany, exile publishing houses such as Sixty Eight Publishers in Toronto, and exile journals, such as Listy and Svědectví. The less political materials provide a life-line for the continuity of Czechoslovak culture and scholarship at a time when official writings are mediocre, and independent expression stamped out by censorship and other forms of control.

The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library has become a repository for materials issued by independent publishers in Czechoslovakia, as well as an archive of materials relating to the CSCE conferences. Although hampered by lack of funds the collection is one of the richest in the world and the only one in Canada. It is open to the use of interested persons and offers a unique resource for those who wish to do research or other writing on contemporary Czechoslovak history, politics, culture and scholarship.

H. Gordon Skilling

**CASES** 1-2

EDICE PETLICE

Ludvík Vaculík in a recent issue of Acta wrote about the beginnings of his enterprise in 1973:

> "What was to become a major cultural undertaking started when Ivan Klíma needed to get the manuscript of his Lepers typed out. To try and save some money, he had it typed in several copies which he then sold to interested parties. There turned out to be more of them than there were copies. It was just at that moment that the Writers' Union publishing house sent me back my Guinea Pigs. So I took a leaf out of Klíma's book... These original copies ... were just stapled together. But it struck me that they could just as easily be properly finished, bound editions. They might even start a book series ...
>
> I thought up a name for them: it was an acronym of the instruction "Výslovný zákaz dalšího opisování rukopisu" (Further copying of this manuscript expressly forbidden) making the Czech word VZDOR (defiance) ... It was only later that I came up with the improved and more poignant title of Petlice (Padlock). I naturally made my Guinea Pigs title no. 1 of the series. It was subsequently transcribed at least ten times. I took care that there should be no reason for the project to be accused of "speculation" or profiteering. My practice was therefore to "sell" copies of manuscripts to their authors and interested parties "at cost" solely to pay for paper, typing and binding ... I got a lot of fun out of that enterprise. I dreamed of expanding it to draw in all the country's major authors ... the snag was that I knew almost [none] ..."

Nevertheless Vaculík managed to attach some major names to his undertaking and the enterprise grew into a major phenomenon.

He continues:

> "All of a sudden Petlice started being talked about abroad ... when [this happened] it was not just other authors who took note, but also, and above all, the State Security ... One autumn - it was either in '75 or '76, I can't be sure - the police gave me three options: I could leave the country, give up Petlice or ..... Meanwhile Petlice was pushing me in the opposite direction: it was demanding more and more. It was taking up all my time, and I was broke. I wasn't even managing to read others' manuscripts and work on them ... There were always several titles in the process of copying, binding or in bags ready for the stampede ... It was probably in the year 1979 that I started to wind up the business as it then was. After discussions with friends, we spread the word that Petlice would continue to exist, but that responsibility for it would be gradually transferred to the authors themselves, if they felt like assuming it. A central registry would continue to be kept, and anyone who wanted to be included would have to submit copies of their work for the record. That explains why, from item 200 onwards, there was a fall in the number of titles recorded for a given year. This does not mean that fewer works were written, only that we no longer knew about them all ... Nowadays I assist Petlice only in so far as I am able and as the fancy takes me. This particularly means in areas where I have a more permanent interest or where there is no one else to do the job. Its future development depends on the authors."

Vaculík intended his Edice Petlice to be a means of preserving manuscripts - a vehicle for circulating new writings both by well-known authors and new talents. He wanted to document the writings of his generation and to provide source material for literary critics, historians, sociologists and philosophers. Therefore among the more than 360 items issued so far, we find fiction, poetry, autobiographies, reminiscences, biographical dictionaries, historical and philosophical essays and anthologies of essays on various topics. Vaculík did not suspect when he began his work that these books would be so popular abroad, and that so many of them would attract the attention of both Western and Czech exile publishing houses; this is his greatest accomplishment. Whether or not this will continue is, as Vaculík says, up to the authors themselves.

**CASE 1**

Pavel Kohout. Bílá kniha. 1975. Edice Petlice no. 6.

Pavel Kohout (born 1928) is the only Czech playwright to have had a play (Poor Murderer) successfully produced on Broadway. While studying philosophy at Charles University in Prague in the early 1950's, he worked for Czech radio and was briefly a cultural attaché in Moscow. Later he was

editor-in-chief of the weekly satirical magazine Dikobraz as well as editor for the armed forces newspaper and for Czech television. Since 1957 he has worked as a freelance playwright and for several major Prague theatres. Until the dissolution of the Writers' Union, Kohout was one of its leading members.

In 1977, Kohout became a signatory of Charter 77 and was subjected to constant police harassment and intimidation. A year later he was given permission to go to Vienna for a year to serve as director of the Burgtheater. During his absence from Czechoslovakia he was deprived of his citizenship because it was alleged that he had damaged his country's interests abroad by having had contact with Czech exiles and by publishing a subversive book: Katyně. This novel about the world's first hangwoman is more than a story of three men in love with one woman; on a more abstract level, it deals with the political situation in Czechoslovakia in the late 1970's and with officials who commit crimes against humanity in the name of law and order. It was therefore considered a "subversive" work.

Bílá kniha is an earlier creation of Kohout's and was written in 1970. The title translated reads: The White Book: The Case of Adam Juráček, Professor of Drawing and Physical Education at the Pedagogical Institute in K., vs. Sir Isaac Newton, Professor of Physics at the University of Cambridge: Reconstructed from Contemporary Records and supplemented by Interesting Documents. Wildly satiric, the book comments on the Czech regime's legal contradictions by having the hero break a natural law: contrary to Newton, Adam Juráček has managed to levitate. With numerous allusions to the events of 1968, its black humour stands as a metaphor for a Marxist regime that can no longer cope with new facts.

Jaroslav Seifert. Morový sloup. 1973. Edice Petlice no. 10.

Jaroslav Seifert is Czechoslovakia's only Nobel laureate. A very popular and prolific author, his works have been translated into many languages and are readily available outside Czechoslovakia.

An ardent Communist since his teens, Seifert left the Party in 1929 because of the dogmatism and anti-intellectualism of its leaders. He then held a variety of editorial positions until 1949, when he became a freelance writer. He fell from grace again in 1956 when he criticized the regime at a Writer's Congress and for many years thereafter was not permitted to publish. During the Prague Spring, he was "rehabilitated" and appointed to replace Eduard Goldstücker as Chairman of the Writers' Union, a position he held until the Union's dissolution. Thereupon he was not permitted to publish again and his poetry only appeared in typescript. In 1984 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He died early in 1985. Following the awarding of the Nobel Prize, the Czechoslovak government began to heap praise on him, claiming that his poetry had given the nation strength during the Nazi occupation and had celebrated the heroes of the Prague uprising of 1945, the liberating soldiers of the Red Army and the country of his birth. Nevertheless, the works which were issued after 1984 in state-sanctioned editions have all been censored. The "unofficial" publications are the only texts true to the originals.

Morový sloup was Seifert's first book to be issued by an independent publishing house. Written in 1971, it was issued in 1973 and again in 1975. One of eighteen Seifert titles brought out by independent publishers between the years 1971 and 1984, it is estimated that a total of one hundred and seventy-six thousand copies were "printed" and distributed for further copying.

Jiří Gruša. Dotazník. 1975. Edice Petlice no. 64.

Jiří Gruša was born in 1938. Following his graduation from Charles University in Prague in 1962, he held a series of editorial positions with major Czech periodicals, culminating in the editorship of Zítřek in 1968. In the spring of 1969 with normalization underway, this organ of the Czech Socialist Party was closed down and Gruša became unemployed. The last issue of Zítřek included an essay by its editor which proved to be the last article he was allowed to publish in his native land.

Although *persona non grata* in the eyes of the regime, Grusa was allowed to work as a labourer. Once his novel Mimner was finished in September 1969, and circulated, he again came to the notice of the authorities, was prosecuted and fired. Unable to find other employment, he began to assist Vaculík with Edice Petlice, taking on some of the editorial work. In 1975, he found employment as secretary of a housing co-operative, a job he held until his arrest in June 1978. He was accused of incitement for having written the novel Dotazník, and served two months in jail.

In 1980, Gruša was allowed to leave the country to spend a year in the United States. During that time he was stripped of his citizenship and denied re-entry. He currently lives in West Germany where he is actively involved in furthering the cause of Czechoslovak literature.

Dotazník (The Questionnaire) tells the story of Jan Chrysostom Kepka, who is applying for a job in a large company and has been asked to fill out a form about his past, his family, character and political attitudes. The questions are standard and he begins by trying to pay serious attention to each one. But as he becomes bored, he embarks upon a wildly imaginative search for his origins, the real nature of his life, his relatives, friends, lovers and fellow citizens, which covers the history of his home town from medieval times to the Nazi occupation, through the post-war chaos and Communist rule, to the Spring of 1968 and the Soviet invasion. Neither an allegory nor political satire, the novel shows the author's concern with his favourite subject: where did man begin and in what manner. Its popularity was such that today one can obtain a copy of this work either in the original or in English, German, French, Swedish, Dutch and Polish.

Československý fejeton/fejton 1976-1977. 1977. Edice Petlice no. 90.

The "feuilleton" is a short essay, often witty, written to entertain rather than to present an intellectual argument. The genre was developed in the nineteenth century by Jan Neruda and in the twentieth by Karel Čapek and others. Dozens have been written by silenced writers since the early

seventies, but it was Ludvík Vaculík, the "editor" of Petlice who advocated the growth of this genre, and began to gather these essays into anthologies dealing with specific topics. The book displayed is one of three with the title of Czech feuilletons, and deals with the trial of the rock group "Plastic People of the Universe" as well as containing reflections on the newly-formed group, Charter 77, and people's reactions to it.

Zdena Tominová. Totální nasazení: deník pracující ženy. 1977. Edice Petlice no. 93.

Zdena Tominová is a poet, writer, translator and signatory of Charter 77. She is also the wife of the philosopher Julius Tomin, founder of Patočka University, which offered a teaching program for students who had not been allowed to continue their education, due either to their own beliefs or those of their parents. Both Tominová and her husband were subjected to police harassment and violence because of their involvement with the Charter group and the teaching program. In 1979 she became a spokesperson for Charter 77 and in June of that year was attacked by a masked assailant and hospitalized with concussion. In 1980 she and her family were forced into exile. Her forty-year old typewriter was allowed to go with her to her new home in England.

Tominová has always been interested in the cause of working women. The title of this collection of prose pieces translates as: Totally Engaged: the Journal of a Working Woman.

Milan Šimečka. Obnovení pořádku. 1977. Edice Petlice no. 115.

Long considered one of Czechoslovakia's foremost sociologists and political scientists, Milan Šimečka was dismissed from his post at the University in Bratislava because he refused to accept as "fraternal assistance" the 1968 Soviet intervention in Czechoslovak internal affairs. Since that time he has worked as a manual labourer. In 1975 all his writings, correspondence and books were confiscated for a year. In 1981 he was imprisoned, charged with "subversive activities" and spent thirteen months in detention without trial.

Obnovení pořádku (The Restoration of Order), which appeared in 1977, was judged best book of the year by "unofficial" writers in Prague. His prize was a collage by the banned artist, Jiří Kolář, but when he went to Prague to collect it, he was seized by the police within a few hours of his arrival and forced to return to Bratislava. After a series of articles against him was published in Nové slovo, the organ of the Slovak Communist Party, Šimečka's wife was dismissed from her position at the University and his son was given less desirable duties during his military service.

Obnovení pořádku, an analysis of conditions in a "normalized" Czechoslovakia, as experienced by the author, is one of the most political books issued by Petlice and has received international recognition, having been translated into French, English, Polish and Italian.

**CASE 2**

Jiří Lederer. České rozhovory. 1978. Edice Petlice no. 117.

Jiří Lederer was arrested for the third time in his career in January 1977 after signing Charter 77. He was accused of sending literary texts abroad and of maintaining contacts with émigrés. Sentenced in October of that year to three years in prison, he was released in January 1980. Previously he had been arrested in 1970 and detained for two months for publishing an article which criticized the Polish authorities for condoning anti-semitism. Exactly two years later he was again arrested for publishing articles in the Paris-based, Polish émigré journal Kultura and in March was sentenced to two years imprisonment for defaming a socialist state. He was released after ten months.

Lederer was not unaccustomed to such harassment. While attending Charles University after the war, he became associated with the Social Democrats and edited their newsletter. When this Party merged with the Communists and he did not agree with this union, he was sent as punishment to the heavy machinery works of Kolben-Danek. "Rehabilitated" in 1954, he was again permitted to work as a journalist. But in 1958 he was fired for writing a favourable review of a "subversive" novel, Josef Škvorecký's Zbalbělci. He moved to Czech radio as head of research, and later was associated with Literární listy and Reportér until they were closed down.

After Lederer's release in January 1980, the police continued to harass him, threatening to deport his Polish-born wife. In September, the Lederers sought political asylum in West Germany where Jiří Lederer died in 1983.

České rozhovory was the book that caused Lederer's first arrest. It is a series of interviews with some of Czechoslovakia's most outstanding proscribed writers, conducted between Easter 1975 and November 1976. The questions range from politics to religion, from daily routines to sleeping patterns. The book was signed by all sixteen people interviewed, with the exception of Havel and Landovský, who were in prison when the work was issued.

Ivan Klíma. Má veselá jitra. 1978. Edice Petlice no. 123.

After graduating from Charles University in 1956, Ivan Klíma spent the years until 1968 holding editorial positions with some of Czechoslovakia's foremost periodicals. One of the most prolific authors of the Prague spring, his views lost him his publication rights after "normalization". He spent 1969-1970 as visiting professor of Slavic languages at the University of Michigan,

1970 as visiting professor of Slavic languages at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Upon his return he was told he would no longer be allowed to publish.

According to some interviews, Klíma had considered staying in the United States, but decided he could accomplish more at home. His life after his return has not been an easy one; the only work he is allowed to do is that of a manual labourer. After dissolution of the Writers' Union in 1970 a group of authors began meeting in Klíma's apartment, where they read their manuscripts to one another. They soon realized that it would be easier to type out and circulate their books beforehand. This gave rise to the whole idea of independent publishing, beginning with Edice Kvart and Petlice.

Klíma's Má veselá jitra (My Cheerful Mornings) contains seven vignettes or short stories in which the author describes his experiences as a dissident in present-day Czechoslovakia. Written between the years 1968 and 1978, it was originally issued in an edition of forty-nine copies.

Jan Vladislav. Šest suchých jehel. 1978. Edice Petlice no. 146.

Jan Vladislav, whose real name is Ladislav Bambásek, was born in 1923 in Hlohovec, Slovakia. During the war, when the universities were closed, he worked as a librarian. Later he tried to complete his studies in comparative literature, but in 1948 was denied the right to do so. Not until 1969 was he able to obtain his doctorate. During the Prague Spring, he was editor-in-chief of Světová literatura, but when the majority of newspapers and periodicals were suppressed during "normalization", he lost the right to publish and to travel. In 1975 he began the unofficial book series Kvart, whose publications are on display in the next case. In 1981 he emigrated to France.

Vladislav's chief interest has always been folklore and he has translated many folk tales from other languages into Czech and Slovak. His Šest suchých jehel (Six Dry-point Poems) is dedicated to the artist Jiří John.

Vlastimil Třešňák. Romulus a Romus. 1978. Edice Petlice no. 154.

Třešňák was born in 1952 and emigrated to Sweden in 1982. After graduating from gymnasium (high school) in Prague, he held a series of jobs, becoming a freelance writer in 1968. His first book Dědo (Grandfather) was published unofficially in 1970, as have all the eleven or more books he has issued to date. Since emigrating, Třešňák has concentrated on writing lyrics and songs.

He has long been fascinated by gypsies and Romulus a Romus is an examination of a day in the life of two gypsy coalmen in Prague. The work is richly illustrated with portraits of gypsy children.

Božena Komarková. Původ a význam lidských práv. 1979. Edice Petlice no. 177.

Božena Komárková has long been a leading advocate of human rights. After graduating from Masaryk University in Brno, she taught at a gymnasium until her arrest in 1940 for being a member of the illegal group Obrana národa (Defence of the Homeland) After waiting two years for a trial, she was sentenced in Berlin in 1942 to twenty years imprisonment. The end of the war brought her release, whereupon she went to work at Red Army Headquarters in Prague as a cartographer. In 1945 she returned to Brno and resumed her teaching duties. She was fired for ideological reasons in 1948. Allowed to teach for one more year, she was then transferred to the Pedagogical Institute Library. She was forced to retire in 1951.

Komárková has written primarily for religious publications. Four of her books have appeared in the Petlice series, the one displayed being a history of the human rights movement. It was originally written in 1969, and although at that time the author was not under a publication ban, the authorities refused its publication. Ten years later Edice Petlice issued an edition of 30 copies.

T.G. Masaryk a naše současnost. 1980. Edice Petlice no. 211.

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937) was the first President of the Czechoslovak Republic which was founded in 1918. Since 1948 his name has been anathema to the Communist regime. He was a non-person until the Prague Spring and since the Soviet intervention, has once again become unacknowledged. Several works dealing with Masaryk and his philosophy have been issued by independent publishers, the one on display being one of the first and largest. The May 1981 issue of Index on Censorship called this book a major triumph. The one thousand page volume was issued to mark the one hundred and thirtieth anniversary of Masaryk's birth and the contributors ranged from banned writers to Catholic theologians, former ministers of the government to writers now living in exile. The volume is impressive both for its size and for the large number of contributors who wished to associate themselves with the democratic values championed by Masaryk.

Ludvík Vaculík. Český snář. 1981. Edice Petlice no. 241.

After finishing his primary education, Ludvík Vaculík went to work for the huge Baťa shoe factory. He attended the Baťa business school and after the war was slated for an administrative career with the company. Instead, he opted for a career in political journalism. In 1950 he completed his journalism

By 1967 he had established himself as a brilliant critic and journalist, but that year, at the Congress of the Writers' Union, he spoke out against the conflict between the regime and Czechoslovakia's intellectuals. The authorities did not approve. When one year later he issued 2000 Words, which called upon the Czechoslovak people to bring pressure on the regime for liberalization, he was ousted from the Writers' Union, and lost his right to publish.

He continued to fight, however, and in the early 1970's he conceived the idea of setting up an independent publishing house, Edice Petlice. His Morčata (Guinea pigs) was the first book to be published by this new venture. Český snář (Czech dream book) was published in 1981 and reflects his life and activities as a dissident during the year 1979.

**CASE 3**

EDICE KVART

Jan Vladislav spent five years running his own "unofficial literary venture" and issued some 120 titles. As was the case with Vaculík, Vladislav was banned from the Czechoslovak Writers' Union after the Soviet intervention of 1968 and felt something had to be done to preserve the literature of the country. He described the beginnings of Kvart in a recent interview for Index on Censorship:

> "Some people started collecting unpublished manuscripts and approached other writers asking them to produce work, which they then had retyped in as many copies as possible. This usually meant a maximum of 10, or on electric type-writers 15, copies ...[As for] my own series, it was not always easy to find the typists, as this work was very badly paid if it was paid at all. Often the typists would be volunteers, not professionals, and of course it showed. I also had to buy the necessary paper, and this had to be good quality onion-skin and good carbon paper. And when everything had been typed and corrected I would bind the books myself ... At first I had my books bound by young professionals in binderies, but when this became too dangerous I bought some primitive equipment and became my own bookbinder. Of course there were problems, I didn't have a guillotine and so had to trim everything by hand ... When I later calculated it, I found a book took on average 10 days to produce, I mean 10 full days of intensive work, reading and correcting typescripts, as well as manual work to do with binding ... When you take into account that I published 120 volumes, that makes 1,200 working days, or three full years. Nobody can do this sort of thing all his life ..."

Police harassment increased considerably over the years. During the many interrogations Vladislav underwent, he repeatedly insisted that he was doing nothing illegal; everything was in keeping with the law and the Czechoslovak Constitution. None of the books were of a political nature; none could be considered even slightly subversive. Nevertheless, the police continued to take a very great interest in his activities. From 1979 on, he was summoned to the police station on a weekly basis; his telephone was tapped, his mail opened or confiscated. In addition, his driver's licence was revoked, and he was threatened with house searches and physical violence. Finally the police tried to frame his wife on a charge of theft. In 1981, Vladislav applied for and received, after a wait of only three days, permission to emigrate. He now lives in Paris, where he is still very much involved with the preservation of his country's literature.

Václav Benda. Černá dívka. 1978.

Václav Benda was a student at Charles University in the 1960's and was awarded a doctorate in 1970. While working on his thesis, he worked as a university lecturer in philosophy, but was forced out of his position in 1968 due to his political and religious views. After his dismissal, he began studying mathematics and computer science and worked in this field until 1977. Once it became known that he had signed the Charter he was again dismissed. He subsequently found work as a furnace stoker in a hotel. In 1979 he became a spokesman for Charter 77 and in May of that year was arrested. Tried in October, he was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

His early writings, some of which have been published unofficially, were chiefly experimental prose pieces. Recently, his interests have been slanted more towards mathematical matters and writing for the Charter group. Černá dívka (Black Girl), a collection of his early pieces, was originally written in 1969 while he was still a student and was revised for publication in 1978. That year it appeared both in the Edice Kvart series and in Edice Petlice.

Několik básníků a jeden malíř. 1979.

This is a collection of translations by Jan Vladislav of poems by Michel Leiris, Jean Pollain, René Daumal and Michel Deguy. Vladislav has also included a series of poems dedicated to the artist Georges Rouault.

Bedřich Fučík. Sedmero zastavení. 1979.

Bedřich Fučík worked as an editor from 1927 until 1951. That year he was arrested together with other Catholic authors and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment. He was released in the general amnesty of 1960. Two

of his books for children appeared in the 1940's, but since his release, his writings have been mainly "for the drawer", many never having appeared in any version. In 1975 Edice Kvart published his Sedmero zastavení (Seven who were Stopped), a collection of biographical pieces.

Vzpomínky a pocty na paměť Jana Patočky. 1980.

Vzpomínky a pocty is a collection of writings dedicated to the memory of the Czech philosopher Ján Patočka.

Patočka obtained his doctorate from Charles University in 1937, and taught there until the universities were closed by the Nazis in 1939. He resumed teaching after the war but was removed from his post by the Communists after three years. In 1968 he was again allowed to take up a teaching position only to be forced into retirement by the purges of 1972. He still continued to teach, however, holding classes in private homes.

Although never a political person, the repressions of the 1970's led Patočka to adopt a more public stance and he became one of the first spokesmen for the new human rights group, Charter 77. In March 1977, after a meeting with the Dutch Foreign Minister, Patočka was arrested by the police in Prague and subjected to some eleven hours of interrogation. Then seventy years old, he collapsed during the questioning, having suffered a cerebral haemorrhage. He died ten days later.

Most of Patočka's works were published abroad and he is considered one of three Czech philosophers of world significance. During the 1930's he studied in France and Germany and worked under the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, who chose Patočka as trustee of his literary papers. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1971 by the University of Aachen, but could not receive it in person since he had been refused permission to travel abroad; the honour was presented to him in 1975 at the German Embassy in Prague.

This Festschrift in his honour contains essays by seventeen banned writers, many of them being memoirs of Patocka. The original copy contained collages by the artist, Jiří Kolář.

## ČESKÁ EXPEDICE

The only known information about this publishing house is that it issued finely designed books of poetry.

Jan Hanč. Události I. 1979.

Jan Hanč died in Prague in 1963. His life-long interest was track and field athletics and he competed in the Munich Olympics of 1936. A selection of his poetic works was issued by Česká Expedice in 1975 and 1979.

Jaromír Hořec. Vnitrozemí. 1979.

Jaromír Hořec worked chiefly as an editor until 1970 when he was released from his duties due to ill-health. He has been involved with several anti-fascist and anti-military groups and helped found and edit many of their periodicals.

Jan Zahradníček. Znamení moci. 1979.

Zahradníček devoted his whole life to literature, either as an editor, poet, critic or translator. Together with other Catholic writers he was arrested in 1951 and received a thirteen year sentence. Like the others he was released in the general amnesty of 1960. He died shortly thereafter. Much of his poetry appeared either under a pseudonym or under the names of "acceptable" authors since he was not allowed to publish. After his death he was "rehabilitated" and his poetry again appeared under his own name in the periodical press.

Znamení moci was actually accepted for publication during the spring of 1968. It was printed but the run was pulped before any copies could be distributed.

**CASE** 4

EDICE EXPEDICE

Started in 1975 by the playwright Václav Havel, "Dispatch" has issued almost one hundred titles of poetry, drama, essays or prose. Selected, edited and signed by Havel, they represent one man's interest in the literature of his country. Many of the works, such as those written by Patočka, Klíma, and Hrabal, have been issued by other independent publishers, but only Havel has included translations of foreign works not readily available in Czechoslovakia by authors such as the philosopher Hannah Arendt, the poet Osip Mandelshtam and the novelist George Orwell. During Havel's prison terms, the books were signed by his wife Olga.

Václav Havel. Pokoušeni. 1985.

Václav Havel is perhaps the most renowned contemporary Czech playwright. Born in 1936, Havel was 12 years old when the Communists took power in 1948, as a result of which his formal education was interrupted. Because of his privileged family background, he was denied permission to enter the gymnasium and forced to take a job in a chemical laboratory at the age of fifteen. Once he had become a worker, he was allowed to enroll in courses given at a local night school. After completing his compulsory military service, Havel applied to drama school and was refused. He then went to work as a stagehand in the Divadlo na Zábradli in Prague and very quickly became its dramaturge and leading playwright. In 1967, already famous, he was accepted as a student at the Akademie musických umění in Prague. Later that year, at the Congress of the Writers' Union, Havel spoke out against literary controls and attacked the Union for its bureaucratic character. Soon thereafter he lost his position at the theatre. Named chairman of the Association of Independent Playwrights in 1968, he was put under a publication ban in 1969. Since then all his works have appeared as "independent" publications or have been published by Western presses. After the ban, Havel worked as a labourer.

In 1975 he began the Edice Expedice series, and in 1977 was one of the first signatories of Charter 77 and, with Jan Patocka and Jirí Hajek, one of its first spokesmen. That year the government began a press campaign against him which culminated in his serving five months in detention. Police harassment continued after his release; he was followed and constantly watched, the police going so far as to build a special guard house outside his home. This activity however did not deter him from issuing a series of articles and essays in typescript and by May 1979, the government lost patience. Havel, together with nine other members of VONS (Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted), was arrested. Tried in October, he was sentenced to four and a half years. He was released in February 1983, due to a severe illness. The authorities did not want him dying in prison as this would create a martyr for the Charter 77 group and its supporters all over the world. Havel survived, but had to spend some months in hospital after his release. He continues to write, give interviews and receive awards. His plays are performed world wide and have been translated into many western languages.

Jiří Kolář. Prométheova játra (1950). 1979.

Born in 1914, Jiří Kolár worked in a variety of occupations before deciding in 1943 to devote himself exclusively to written and graphic works. He was co-founder of the artistic group "42" whose ideal was to combine the written word with artistic imagery to give visible expression to the depressed spirit of the times. In 1952 he was imprisoned for issuing a *samizdat* collection of poems. He stopped writing at that time and began to produce "visible" poetry. He experimented with many styles, finally settling on concrete poetry and collages. His efforts have won him prizes all over the

world. In 1978 he was allowed to visit West Germany for 2 years. Shortly after his return to Prague, he emigrated to France.

Jan Lopatka. Šifra. 1983.

Jan Lopatka worked as an editor and literary critic until his expulsion from the Writers' Union. Since then he has had a variety of menial positions. In 1980 he became part of the collective of spokesmen for Charter 77.

Šifra (Cipher) contains essays, reviews and "an expert's opinion" of modern Czech literature, written between 1969 and 1983.

H. Gordon Skilling. Listy z Prahy, 1937-1940. 1985.

H. Gordon Skilling is Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto. He first visited Czechoslovakia in 1937 to do research for his doctoral thesis and was there during the Munich crisis and the first months of the German occupation. He has published many books on Czechoslovakia and Eastern Europe and since 1977 has been in close contact with the human rights movement in Czechoslovakia. His book Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe will be published by Macmillan, London later this year.

Listy z Prahy (Letters from Prague) contains the author's impressions of Czechoslovakia and were written between July 1937 and July 1940, when the German invasion forced Professor Skilling to return to Canada.

Karel Trinkewitz. Metaromán. 1979.

Since 1979 Karel Trimkewitz has lived in West Germany. He was a law student at Charles University in Prague until his expulsion due to his political views. He has been writing experimental poetry and essays since 1970.

**CASE** 5

SMALLER INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS

On display in this case are works issued by smaller independent publishers about whom almost nothing is known.

Egon Bondy. Velká kniha. Edice půlnoc [198-?]

This collection of poems is an example of another series edited by Václav Havel.

Egon Bondy is perhaps best known in Czechoslovakia as the lyricist for the controversial rock group "Plastic People of the Universe". He is one of the most popular of the contemporary Czech poets and his typescript books are widely circulated.

Ladislav Hejdánek. Život a slovo. Oikoumené, 1985.

There is no information available on whether Oikoumené is a publishing enterprise or a series, since the work displayed is the only example in the Fisher Library.

Život a slovo is a critique of modern literature written by the philosopher Ladislav Hejdánek. Like Jan Patočka, Hejdánek has been excluded from professional work in his field for most of his life and has been forced to earn his living by manual labour. In 1968 he was appointed to the Czech Institute of Philosophy at the Academy of Sciences, only to lose his position during the 1971 purges. As soon as it became known that he had signed Charter 77, he lost his night watchman's job. He was part of the collective of spokesmen for the Charter group in 1977 and again in 1979.

Ferdinand Peroutka. O věcech obecných. Anamnésis [198-?]

No information is available about this publisher. The work displayed is a collection of essays by the exiled journalist Ferdinand Peroutka, who died in New York in 1978. Peroutka left Czechoslovakia after the 1948 coup and worked for Radio Free Europe in Munich and in France, later moving to New York. Before his departure in 1948, Peroutka's essays and books on Czechoslovak politics had been published in Czechoslovakia on an annual basis. After 1948, his articles appeared in a great many émigré newspapers and journals. This selection of his essays depicts the intellectual and political scene in Czecholovakia during the 1920's and 30's.

Polis a religio. Nové cesty myšlení, 1983.

This publishing enterprise issues works on religious themes. Polis a religio (The community and religion) is a compilation of essays on Communism and Christianity, issued in honour of the seventieth birthday of the theologian Josef Zvěřina, one of the Catholics imprisoned in the 1950's.

Bedřich Fučík. Čtrnáctero zastavení. Edice F.T., 1984.

No information about this publisher is available. In this work Bedřich Fučík writes about fourteen people who, like himself, were refused publication privileges in twentieth-century Czechoslovakia. This work appeared in at least three unofficial editions in 1975, 1981 and 1984.

Jakub Deml. Ledové květy. Olomouc: P. Mikeš a E. Zácha, 1973.
Miloš. Olomouc: P. Mikeš, R. Valušek a E. Zácha, 1974.

These two publications are the only ones in the Library's collection of independent literature in which the publishers are actually named. Until now, they have only issued works by the Catholic priest, Jakub Deml. Deml was so much involved with the artistic community in Czechoslovakia in the early years of this century that his superiors removed him from his religious duties. A prolific writer, his poems and essays appeared in most of the Czech newspapers and periodicals of the day. An edition of his early work was scheduled to be issued in 1948, but, after the coup, the authorities forbade its publication. All editions since that time have been in typescript form.

**CASE 6**

AUTHORS AS PUBLISHERS

Many authors do not align themselves with publishing enterprises, preferring to issue and distribute their works themselves.

Jozef Jablonický. Ilegalita uprostred vojny. 1981.
Kto bol kto. 1982.
Partizáni v Auguste 1944. 1983.
Za sovietské Slovensko. 1984.
Neúspešná misia v Moskve. 1985.

Jozef Jablonický was, until 1974, head of the Contemporary History Section of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In the 1960's he began to publish a series of works dealing with the anti-fascist resistance movement in Slovakia during the Second World War. In 1969 he published a major work on the Slovak National Uprising, for which he received a prize in 1970. In September 1973, this work was removed from bookstores and libraries, condemned by the Party for disparaging the role of the Communists and exaggerating that of the non-Communists. In 1974 Jablonický was dismissed from his post and denied further publication privileges. Since that time he has been under constant police surveillance, subject to house arrest, denied access to books, research materials and archives and has spent time in prison.

None of this has deterred him from writing. To date he has produced some thirteen monographs, totalling over thirteen hundred pages, all dealing with Slovakia during the Second World War.

Bohumil Hrabal. Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále. 1971.

Whether Bohumil Hrabal really should be considered a banned author is a moot point, since in 1975 he published in an official periodical the news of his conversion to the party line. He was banned, however, from 1970 to 1975.

Hrabal came late to literature; he was already in his fifties when, in 1963, he decided to devote himself to writing. He quickly became very popular, writing filmscripts, essays for leading periodicals and works for children. After the ban, most of his works were written "for the drawer", but he has managed to issue a great many himself. His most widely distributed work is Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále (I served the King of England). Issued by most of the independent publishers and also by the semi-official Jazz Section this collection of five novellas describes the experiences of a waiter in the 1930's and 40's.

In 1974, Hrabal stated that he wanted peace and quiet for a few more years so he could finish his personal five year program; then he would do whatever it took to get his books published. In 1975 he accomplished both his aims by giving his famous interview to the journal Tvorba. As a result, two of his works were published officially.

Rudolf Battěk. Eseje z ostrova. 1977.

Rudolf Battěk was a member of the Sociological Section of the Czech Academy of Sciences until his arrest in 1969 for political reasons. Released in 1970, he was again imprisoned in 1971, and released again in 1974. An early spokesman for Charter 77, he is one of the group of independent socialists within the Czech human rights movement. In June 1980 he was arrested on a charge of assaulting a public official and breaching the peace. He was sentenced later that year to seven years imprisonment.

He has issued two works himself: Eseje z ostrova (Essays from an Island) and Strast z nekonečna (Suffering from Infinity); a collection of letters written while he was in prison.

Dany je náš. 1984.

This Festschrift was compiled by Alexandr Kliment in honour of Josef Škvorecký's sixtieth birthday.

Škvorecký, professor of English and Film at Erindale College, University of Toronto, is perhaps best known for his novels. But for the Czechoslovakian émigré community, he is the founder of 68 Publishers, which he established with his wife, Zdena Salivarová, in 1971 in Toronto. 68 Publishers issues many works by banned Czech and Slovak writers.

The character Dany, after whom the Festschrift is named, is the chief protagonist of some of Škvorecký's novels and is based on Škvorecký himself. The work contains contributions by many writers whose works Škvorecký introduced to the West.

**CASES 7 AND 8**

THE SCHOLARLY AND LITERARY JOURNALS

Historické studie

Kritický sborník

Zebra

Obsah

Informace o církvi

Una sancta catholica

Čtverec

Ekonomická revue

Výběr z československé čtenářské samoobsluhy

Another form of independent publishing that is rapidly gaining in importance is that of the scholarly or literary journal.

One of the longest running journals first appeared in 1978 under the title Historicke studie. Since that time it has been issued regularly, but each time under a different title, and with no numbering. This is to prevent the authorities from classing it as a periodical, and harassing the editors. For this reason also, the editors are never named. In November 1982, after eight issues, there would appear to have been a difference of opinion among them, since that month two issues, each with a different title, appeared simultaneously. Differences resolved, issues still appear on a regular basis.

The best known of the journals is Kritický sborník, which has been published four times a year since 1981. Again, the editors are never named, but usually the authors sign their articles.

Some journals are issued without a name: one came to be known as Zebra, because of the stripes on the cover; each issue bearing a different configuration. Obsah (Contents) simply lists the contents of each issue on the title leaf.

An interesting theological journal, Informace o církvi (Information on the Church) has appeared since 1980. It has a very large circulation, since it is mimeographed. Each issue does not have to be typed out laboriously and circulated for additional people to read and type. An annual compilation Una sancta catholica appeared in 1983 and 1984.

Some journals appear only infrequently or die when their editors are imprisoned or go into exile. Jiří Dienstbier, a former foreign correspondent for Czech radio, edited the first issue of Čtverec (The Square), a journal devoted to foreign affairs. In 1979, after he was imprisoned, only two more issues appeared, the last in 1980. Vladimir Kadlec edits Ekonomická revue, which also appears irregularly.

At times we are unable to ascertain the fate of many of these periodicals. We have been told that the annual Výběr z československé čtenářské samoobsluhy (Selections from the Czechoslovak Readers' Self-Service) has appeared for many years, but we have only seen two issues. Our agents have been unable to supply us with any others. Some titles we know about, but again, our agents have been unable to find any copies.

## EAST READING ROOM

### JAZZ SECTION

In 1971 a group of jazz enthusiasts applied to the Ministry of the Interior for permission to form a Union of Czech Jazz Musicians. They were turned down, and told to apply individually to the general Musicians' Union. The Union decided that the Ministry wanted them to create a sub-union of jazz musicians or special interest group as was allowed by its statutes. Thus was born the Jazz Section.

At first the Jazz Section's activities were strictly conventional. It held jam sessions, sent lecturers to cultural clubs, issued a bulletin for its members and sponsored the annual Prague Jazz Days. In the early years the jazz was orthodox and the events did not attract much attention. But in the mid-1970's the jazz became jazz/rock 'n' roll, and suddenly the events were attracting capacity audiences - and the attention of the authorities. By 1982, the authorities had had enough: this unorthodoxy had to be halted. At the last minute and despite sold-out audiences that year's Jazz Days were cancelled. Since that time, JS has been unable to schedule any public events, and has been forced to stage small private concerts wherever it is able to find space.

Allowed by its statutes to publish works for its members, the volunteers of the Jazz Section, headed by Karel Srp, began to issue other publications. For members they added a paperback series: Jazzpetit, and a line of art monographs, Situace. Jazzpetit books include works on John Lennon, the music of the Terezín ghetto, a biography of E.F. Burian, and a history of rock music in Czechoslovakia. Its most ambitious production was the three volume bibliography of rock music and musicians. It has also issued Hrabal's popular Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále, as well as Jaroslav Seifert's Nobel Prize speech.

In 1984 the government began to fight back in earnest. Several members were arrested in 1985. Srp was accused of misusing funds derived from the sale of books and tapes; others of harming the interests of the Czechoslovak Republic abroad. Srp and Vladimír Kouřil, the secretary of JS, were tried in March 1987. The trial attracted crowds of supporters and, after two days, the chief judge pronounced them guilty of unauthorized economic activities. Srp received a sentence of sixteen months - minus the six months he had already served, Kouřil, ten months, again minus the six months he had been in jail. The co-defendants all received suspended sentences. These comparatively light sentences were perceived as a slap in the face for the state and a vindication of the activities of the Jazz Section.

The Fisher Library is fortunate to hold almost the complete archives of this semi-official publishing enterprise.

**WEST READING ROOM**

CHARTER 77

By late 1976, after seven years of "normalization", many of even the most optimistic Czechoslovak intellectuals had given up hope that their country would ever again experience reform. Many felt a sense of desperation and a growing conviction that, if anything was going to be done, it was up to them to do it. According to H.G. Skilling in his work on this human rights movement, Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1981): "It is not known who conceived the idea of Charter 77 and who took the initiative for its formulation. It seems to have been a product of the personal contacts and discussions among prominent cultural personalities, representatives of the musical underground and leading reform communists."

Several meetings were held in December 1976 and by January 6, 1977, copies of the Charter were ready to be sent out to the two hundred and forty signatories, the President of Czechoslovakia, the Federal Assembly and the Czechoslovak Press Agency. The messengers were detained and the copies confiscated, but the Charter still reached its public in an unexpected way. It was published in full in the West German Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung the next day. There was immediate support from all over the world - support that has continued to this day, as the group strives to defend the rights of Czechoslovak citizens, and at the same time, appeals to them to rise up from their apathy and attempt to bring about changes themselves.

Charter 77 has issued many documents since its beginning, most of which are available in this Library. These include essays, news releases, situation reports, trial notes, declarations, and letters to the Czechoslovak authorities. A selection is displayed in these cases.

Exhibition and text by Luba Hussel.
Introduction by Professor H. Gordon Skilling.
Exhibition mounted by Emrys Evans and Linda Joy.
Photograph of padlocked typewriter by Helena Wilson, Toronto.
Word processing by Jennifer Ramlochan.
Cards typed by June Felix.